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The Determined Twins and the Delicate Princess

BY EDGAR JEPSON.

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The Princess looked from one to the other, hesitating with puckered brow, and then, with a touch of appeal in her tone, she said, "Are you—are you coming to-morrow?"

The Twins looked at one another doubtfully; then the appealing face of the Princess touched the Terror's heart; and he said politely:

"We should like to. But we'd better meet you at the edge of the wood—just about the same time. The keepers aren't about much there—especially if it's hot. Tom Cobb says they're asleep."

"Yes, I'll come then. The Baroness is asleep, too," said the Princess eagerly.

The call came again from the wood below, louder.

"Oh, it isn't the Baroness. It's Miss Lambert," said the Princess in a tone of relief.

"You take too much notice of that Baroness," said Erebus again firmly.

"Who is Miss Lambert?"

"She's my English lady-in-waiting. I always have one when I'm in England, of course. I like her. She tries to amuse me. But the Baroness doesn't like her," said the Princess; and she sighed.

"She wouldn't," said Erebus darkly, for already she had her suspicions of the Baroness.

"Come along; I'll help you down the bank and take you to the edge of the wood," said the Terror.

He half-carried her down the steep bank, adjusting her to confine herself to the simple, if incomplete, statement that she had been walking in the wood. His last words to her were:

"Don't you stand so much nonsense from that Baroness."

The Princess joined Miss Lambert; and she did confine herself to the statement that she had been walking in the wood. The Terror returned to Erebus and found her stretched at her ease, eating a peach.

"I should have liked one a good deal sooner," he said as he took one from the basket. "But I didn't like to say anything about them. She mightn't have understood."

It did not occur to either of them that they had been treating a Princess with considerable firmness.

On the next day, owing to a matter of a young rabbit they met on their way to the wood and vainly tried to catch, they kept the Princess waiting for twenty minutes. It was a quite new experience to her; but she did not complain to the Twins of this unheard-of breach of etiquette. She was doubtful how the complaint would be received, at any rate by Erebus. They went again to the pool; and this time the Princess discovered that it was rather pleasant to be handed up the bank by the Terror. She found his strength comforting. She told them at once of the excited fuss the Baroness had made about her having gone alone into such a fearful and dangerous place as the home wood. The Twins counselled her more fully and earnestly than the day before; and the Princess dallied thoughtfully with the attractive idea. Then they applied themselves with no less earnestness to the matter of developing her muscles. They showed her some exercises which their mother practiced, and made her practice them then and there, and promise to practice them at home. Soon after four she left them in order to get back to the garden before the Baroness awoke. But before she went she begged them to come on the morrow. They had had other views for the morrow; but out of the kindness of their hearts they yielded to her entreaties. The Terror with an admirable carelessness suggested that she should bring some peaches with her.

He conducted her down to the edge of the wood; and as he parted from her, he said: "Why don't you make them let you have some one to play with? It's silly being as dull as you are. What's the good of being a Princess?"

"Oh, yes!" said the Princess; and her cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkled. "It would be nice! Why shouldn't you and Erebus come to tea with me—often?"

"I don't think they'd let you have us," said the Terror frankly.

"Oh, but they shall!" said the Princess firmly.

He returned to Erebus with a somewhat rueful air. The prospect of going to the Grange in immaculate attire did not greatly attract him, though, as he observed to Erebus, there was always the tea. He preferred the Princess in the wood.

But the seed sown in the mind of the Princess forthwith bore fruit. That very night when she was supping, with the Baroness and Miss Lambert in attendance, she said that she wanted some one to play with. Miss Lambert with thoughtless quickness said that it was an excellent idea. But the Baroness, annoyed by the suggestion, and further annoyed that Miss Lambert had welcomed it, protested vehemently; where were the well-born ones in the keepings fitted to be the playmates of a Princess of Cassel-Nassau?

Forthwith the Princess, invigorated by two afternoons in the open air and the bracing society of the Twins, untamed. She told the Baroness almost fiercely that she would have some one to play with. She commanded her to find some one. She was careful not to suggest the Twins, for they had impressed it on her that her acquaintance with them must not be known. The Baroness, dumbfounded, was almost in tears when she consented to comply with the demand.

Dr. Arbuthnot was consulted; and he said at once that from the point of view of well-borne, the Twins were undoubtedly the right children of the neighborhood to play with the Princess (if always they could be induced to play with a little girl), but he doubted the wisdom of exposing an impressionable Princess to the influence of such free and ardent spirits. The Baroness had no doubt at all about the unwisdom of doing so. In the end Wiggins was selected for the honorable post.

(To be continued)



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"Is that so?" replied the guest.

"Now, that's fine," he went on. "You are ambitious?"

"Yes, I'm ambitious to eat!"

HE KNEW.

"John, dear, I don't think you are looking well."

"No?"

"Really, John I don't feel that I am taking very good care of you these days."

"Hah."

"John, what do you want for dinner tonight—what would you rather have tonight than anything else?"

"What did you do, charge it or send it C. O. D.?"

Abe Marks has been deprived of his license to referee fights in New York state by the athletic commission, on the grounds that he acted as manager of several boxers, and also that he had acted as referee when they fought, in violation of the rules.

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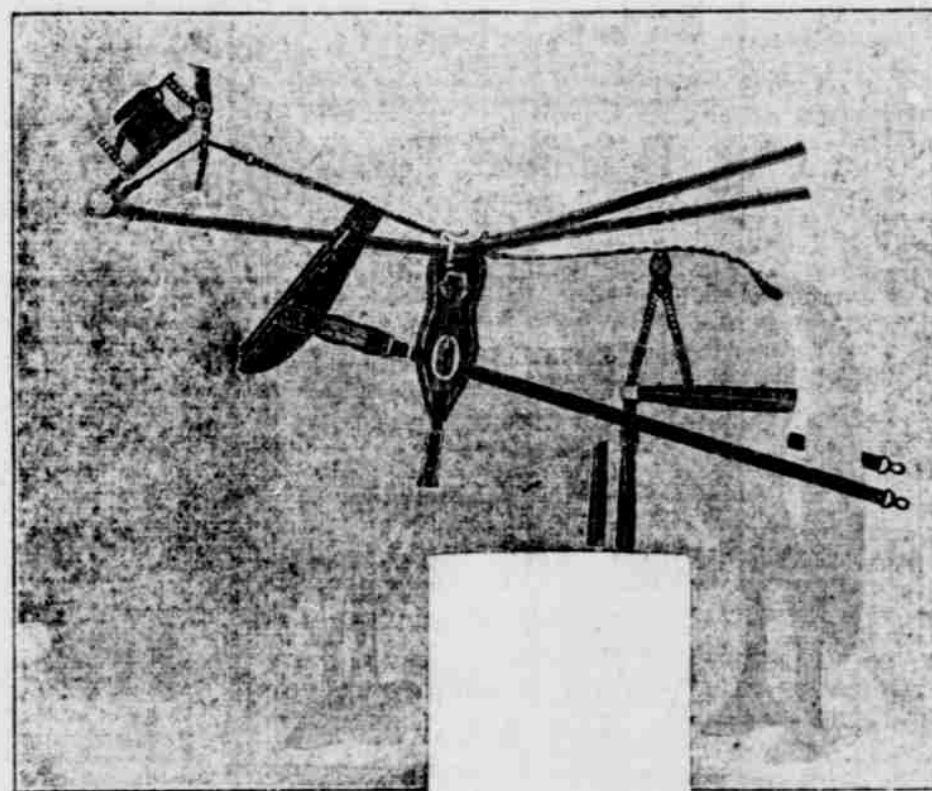
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